





MADRIGALS AND CATCHES.

MADRIGALS AND CATCHES

BY

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN

FOURTH EDITION

—“*virginibus puerisque canto*”

—HORACE.

“*Made for madrigals and catches*”

—DOBSON.



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MADRIGALS AND CATCHES.



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FANCY.

LIFT the oars and let us go
Whither listless winds may blow,—
Drifting idly with the tide,
Kissing grasses either side,—
Skimming deeps that lie between
Bending willow-branches green :
On, and on, and on we'll float
With no pilot for our boat
Save the zephyr, cool and bland,
Lisping from the launching-land,—
Guided by no stars above,—
Only lucent eyes of love.

Sailing, we at last shall reach
Silver sands of island beach,
Where a seaward-blown perfume
Hints of orchard fruit and bloom.
In this golden ocean-isle
Let us wander for a while,
Plucking from its treasure-trees
Apples of Hesperides.

MORNING MIST.

A CROSS the level meadow-land
There hangs a veil of vapor white,
Like some forgotten robe of night
Held in the morning's rosy hand.

Along the grass the wind-waves run,
And wake the witches' weird refrain :
" Behold the ghost of last night's rain !"
And lo, it melts before the sun.

Then comes a rustle in the wood,
As if upon the leaves were cast
A sudden spell,—the ghost has passed
Into their shadowed solitude !

DAWN AND DUSK.

I.

SLENDER strips of crimson sky
Near the dim horizon lie,
Shot across with golden bars
Reaching to the fading stars ;
Soft the balmy west wind blows
Wide the portals of the rose ;
Smell of dewy pine and fir,
Lisping leaves and vines astir ;
On the borders of the dark
Gayly sings the meadow-lark,
Bidding all the birds assemble,—
Hark, the welkin seems to tremble !
Suddenly the sunny gleams
Break the poppy-fettered dreams,—
Dreams of Pan, with two feet cloven,
Piping to the nymph and faun,
Who, with wreaths of ivy woven,
Nimbly dance to greet the dawn.

II.

Shifting shadows indistinct ;
Leaves and branches, crossed and linked
Cling like children, and embrace,
Frightened at the moon's pale face.

In the gloomy wood begins
Noise of insect violins ;
Swarms of fireflies flash their lamps
In their atmospheric camps,
And the sad-voiced whip-poor-will
Echoes back from hill to hill,
Liquid clear above the crickets
Chirping in the thorny thickets.

Weary eyelids, eyes that weep,
Wait the magic touch of sleep ;

While the dew, in silence falling,
Fills the air with scent of musk,
And this lonely night-bird, calling,
Drops a note down through the dusk.

SUMMER.

M EADOWS lost in clouds of mist ;
Grass whose lips the dew has kissed ;
Buds whose fragrant breath is drawn
Through the freshness of the dawn ;
Vines in whose slight pulses flows
Life-blood of the crimson rose ;
Flocks of happy-hearted birds
Talking in melodious words ;
Brooks, unfettered by the Spring,
Through the pastures murmuring,—
Children prattling in their glee
Chasing to the mother sea ;
Soft south-breezes,—gentle rain,—
Rival wooers of the plain ;

Here and there beside the path
Flowers emerging from their bath ;
Waving forest-floods of green,
Leaves with blossoms white between.

Ah ! the bud is open now,
Hints of fruit hang on the bough,
And the velvet rose is born
At the coming of the morn :
There's a gladness in the sun
Speaks of something new begun,—
Of a work mysterious
Nature has performed for us.
Hark, the honey-bee's low hum
Tells us that the summer's come !

INDIAN SUMMER.

A CROSS the billowy meadow grasses
The Summer passes with languid tread,
And where she journeys the path is burning,
And leaves are turning to brown and red.

She goes in silence across the valley
Where low winds rally around her track
And touch her garment and murmur, " Maiden,
With roses laden, come back, come back ! "

She does not heed them,—she does not listen ;
Her soft eyes glisten with welling tears ;
Her heart grows heavy for not replying
To verdure dying,—to prayers she hears.

But once, in sorrow, she turns and lingers
To kiss the fingers fast growing cold,
And all the Earth for a moment's pleasure
Yields up her treasure of yellow gold.

THE ICE-PRISONER.

A BOVE,—a dome of gray ; below,—
The landscape carpeted with snow :
No bird so warmly clad or bold
Who dares to brave the bitter cold.
I find within the silent wood
A solitude of solitude.
Through leafless trees no breeze is blown
To hint that I am not alone,—
No echo cracks the crystal air :
The world about me seems to wear
A look of peaceful loneliness,
Remembering the soft caress
Of summer winds that robbed the flowers,
And music measuring the hours.

Throughout the land the hush of death :
I breathe, and, lo,—the ghost of breath !
The crisp snow crunches 'neath my tread
Like fallen twigs and branches dead.

But hark ! Along the frozen ground
I catch a muffled liquid sound,—
A voice that sings of Paradise,
Low murmuring in walls of ice,—
A melody that seems to run
To find again the truant sun.
I hear the fettered pulses stir
Of winter's happy prisoner
Whose merry song and laughter bring
A thought of the returning spring,—
Of buds and grass with warm rain wet,
And April's early violet.

FEBRUARY.

LIKE mimic meteors the snow
In silence out of heaven sifts,
And wanton winds that wake and blow
Pile high their monumental drifts.

And looking through the window-panes
I see, 'mid loops and angles crossed,
The dainty geometric skeins
Drawn by the fingers of the Frost.

'Tis here at dawn where comes his Love,
All eager and with smile benign,—
A golden Sunbeam from above,—
To read the Frost's gay valentine.

THE MARCH WIND.

BLOW, wind of March, and sing
Your songs unto the timid buds and grass !
Unclasp the fetters of the woodland spring
Hushed in its house of glass.

Blow, wind of March, and thrill
The languid pulses of the barren trees,
Until their empty hands with blossoms fill
And tempt the honey-bees.

Blow, wind of March, and wake
The sleeping violets with gentle words ,
Spread your green canopy of leaves and make
A shelter for the birds.

Blow, sturdy wind of March,
And burst the winter's frosty prison-bars ;
Blow all the clouds from heaven's azure arch
And stud it with white stars.

Blow, wind of March, ay, blow,
Until the orchards heed your voice, and bloom ;
Then whisper softly where the wild flowers grow
About the winter's tomb.

AN APRIL CAROL.

A PRIL !

Robin, sing to greet her ;

Down the meadow dart to meet her !

See, she brings the leaf and flower,

Fickle sun and fickle shower,

Gives the day another hour,

Makes the breezes sweeter.

April !

Maidens, lend your faces

Dimpled smiles and gentle graces !

See, she brings the blue-bells' chimes,

Tardy lovers with their rhymes,

Steals her days from warmer climes,

Nights from dewy places.

April !

Song, be blithe and tender ;
Music, sound with double splendor !
See, she brings the warbling birds,
Troops of bees and dappled herds,
Teaches love mysterious words,
Bids the heart surrender.

IDYLLIC.

To lie beneath a cloudless sky
On moss beside a shallow brook
Where smells of wild-flowers in the dells
Make me forgetful of my book,—
To dream of shepherd with his crook,
Of sheep on grassy slopes asleep,—
To catch a visionary look
Of shepherdess, and hear her step
Fall like a whisper on the ground,—
To watch her sunny smiles, and see
Her dainty garments, soft and snowy,
Fold gracefully her form around,—
'Tis like a day in Sicily
With Daphnis and his sweetheart Chloë.

A GLOW-WORM.

CLOSE by the margin tufts of grass
Weighed down with dew and damp,
I found you as I chanced to pass,
Your trimmed and shining lamp
Illumining with greenish light
The dusty road in dusky night :

A velvet ring set round with gems
That softly shone below
The pale blue chicory's tall stems,
As if the path to show
To some belated beetle who
Went stumbling homeward in the dew :

A phosphorescent beacon there,—
A solitary guide
For insect ships that sail the air
On breaths of fragrant tide ;
Or were you from some realm on high—
A star dropped from the summer sky ?

IN AN OLD GARDEN.

THREE giant fir-trees reach their arms
To shade this quiet garden plot,
And here and there a fragrant knot
Of roses tempts the buzzing swarms.

Amid a host of alien weeds
Spring faces of familiar blooms
Which, breathing stories in perfumes,
Seem ghosts of some forgotten seeds.

The creeping vine, its tendrils round
The crooked rows of untrimmed box,
Forsaken now, methinks it knocks
To gain admittance to the ground.

All, all is waste and desolate,—
The blowing firs are full of grief,
The blue-bird hidden by a leaf
Sings sorrowfully to his mate.

The scattered flowers alone are gay ;
Their fragrance fills the gentle wind,
And I, grown drowsy, dream and find
The long forgotten yesterday.

WITH A ROSE.

A TINY fire within this rose
Lends to the leaves a crimson flush
Like that soft tint which comes and goes
And weaves a modest maiden's blush.

So to my Sweet this censer bloom
Swung by Love's little acolyte
I send, that all its fine perfume
May float around her through the night.

Go, Rose, unto my heart's desire,
Perchance her love for you may frame
A dream of Cupids in a choir
All chanting lyrics to her name.

And when the dream shall end at last,
A priceless gift shall be your fee,—
To feel her kisses falling fast
Upon your lips for love of me.

TO A DAISY.

WEE, little rimless wheel of Fate,
With silver spokes and hub of yellow,
What gentle girl, in accents mellow,
Has sought your aid to find a mate?

Who snapt your slender spokes apart,
Each one some dear acquaintance naming?
And who was he—the loved one, claiming
The choicest chamber in her heart?

O tiny hub of golden hue,
Kissed by her fingers' tender pressing,
Still yet, methinks, she's vainly guessing
If what you prophesied were true.

You died between her finger-tips,
Sweet gypsy maid of wisdom magic;
Pray, is it worth a death so tragic
To hear the music of her lips?

ON SOME BUTTERCUPS.

A LITTLE way below her chin,
Caught in her bosom's snowy hem,
Some buttercups are fastened in,—
Ah, how I envy them !

They do not miss their meadow place,
Nor are they conscious that their skies
Are not the heavens, but her face,
Her hair, and mild blue eyes.

There, in the downy meshes pinned,
Such sweet illusions haunt their rest ;
They think her breath the fragrant wind,
And tremble on her breast ;

As if, close to her heart, they heard
A captive secret slip its cell,
And with desire were sudden stirred
To find a voice and tell !

TO A DANDELION.

LITTLE mimic of the sun,
Hiding in the fragrant grass,
Have you any kisses won
From the pretty maids who pass ?
When the sun slips down the west
Some fair girl shall come in quest
Of the secret which you lock
In your tiny golden breast :
You shall hear an airy knock,
And a question : What o'clock ?

Ah, you dainty, snowy ghost,
See what bliss your wisdom brings !
Tell me, pray, what angels boast
Such a zephyr for their wings ?

Just because the hour you tell,
She repays your magic well,—
Wafts you off to paradise ;
Sounds for you a gentle knell ;
Lights your journey with her eyes :
Would that I were half so wise !

APPLE BLOSSOMS.

THE soft wind whispered secrets to the apple tree,
Caressed her in his arms and would not let
her go

Until the rosy blossoms came triumphantly
To tell the one sweet message that he wished to know.

A timid maiden with her lover lingered there
In silence, clasping hands amid the leaves that
fell,

Till one bold blossom drifting down the per-
fumed air

Just touched her rounded cheek, and bade the blushes
tell.

A ROSE LYRIC.

ROSE in the garden-close,
Why, when the light wind blows,
Why do you bend your head?
Why do your cheeks grow red?
Rose, my sweet,—rose at my feet,
Tell me !

What does the soft gale say
Whispering low all day,—
Kissing your lips a-bloom,
Answering back perfume ?
Rose, my sweet,—rose at my feet,
Tell me !

Tell me that I may woo
Her as the wind wooes you ;
What are the words that start
Blushes from your sweet heart ?
Rose, my sweet,—rose at my feet,
Tell me !

Rose, of all roses, queen,
Budding at seventeen,
Place the flower near your lip,
Then if the secret slip,
Rose, my Sweet,—Rose, at your feet,
Tell me !

“PANSIES FOR THOUGHTS.”

FOR you these tiny flowers are cut,—
These slender-stemmed, rich purple pansies;
A thousand thoughts and tender fancies
Within their little hearts are shut.
Sweet memories of happy hours
We spent together,—dear romances,—
Like love in one of Cupid's glances,
Hide in the fragrance of these flowers.

NOBILITY.

THE sturdy wind that fills the ship's white sail
And turns the mighty mill-wheel when it blows,
Once breathed the love-song of the nightingale,
And wafted him the perfume of the rose.

Let him who seeks a god-like man to find
Think of the wind, and seek its counterpart :
The tempest's strength, matched by a noble mind,
The zephyr by a pure and gentle heart !

A BUNCH OF QUATRAINS.

A QUATRAIN.

HARK at the lips of this pink whorl of shell
And you shall hear the ocean's surge and roar ;
So in the quatrain's measure, written well,
A thousand lines shall all be sung in four !

A RED ROSE.

Once, long ago, in some sweet garden's hush,
A lover gave you, snow-white, to his love ;
And, lifted to her lips, you saw her blush
And blushed to match her damask cheek above.

APRIL.

As any child, this baby of the year's
Made glad with toys, forgets imagined woes :
Thus comes young April smiling through her tears,
Her toys the flowers, her grief the vanished snows.

BACCHUS.

L ISTEN to the tawny thief,
Hid behind the waxen leaf,
Growling at his fairy host,
Bidding her with angry boast
Fill his cup with wine distilled
From the dew the dawn has spilled :
Stored away in golden casks
Is the precious draught he asks.

Who,—who makes this mimic din
In this mimic meadow inn,
Sings in such a drowsy note,
Wears a golden belted coat ;
Loiters in the dainty room
Of this tavern of perfume ;
Dares to linger at the cup
Till the yellow sun is up ?

Bacchus, 'tis, come back again
To the busy haunts of men ;
Garlanded and gayly dressed,
Bands of gold about his breast ;
Straying from his paradise,
Having pinions angel-wise,—
'Tis the honey-bee, who goes
Reveling within a rose !

A LYRIC.

A LYRIC is a tiny bird,—
 Gay lover of the garden blooms,—
Whose little heart is ever stirred
 By colors and perfumes.

Its flights are near the lowly things,
 Not to the eagle-epic's skies :
It is content to flash its wings
 Beneath my loved one's eyes.

Go then, my song, you have the chart
 To guide you to a gentle clime,—
Go build your nest, and thrill her heart
 With flutterings of rhyme !

A CATCH.

IF any grace
To me belong,
In song,
Know then your face
Has been to me
A key ;
For pitched in this
Delicious tone,
I've known
I could not miss
What music slips
Your lips.

If faults be found
In any line
Of mine,
To mar the sound
Of notes that try
To vie
With yours, my Sweet,
Then, always true,
Do you
The words repeat,
And make sublime
My rhyme !

A SNARE.

LOVE I locked upon a time
In the fetters of my rhyme,
Bound his feet and fixed his hands
Firm in fancy-forgèd bands,
Fastened with a dainty twist
Couplet-gyves around his wrist,
Sealed his lips and left him, dumb,
Prisoner till She should come.

Then I said unto my Heart :
" By this magic, by this art
You shall learn if She be kind
To your constancy, or blind :
Like the rhyme your chains are stout :
Captive in the dungeon Doubt,
There you languish at the door
Praying freedom evermore.

If she pity Love's distress,—
If, with maiden tenderness,
She his bands and fetters slip,
Murmuring with trembling lip
Linkèd music of my song,—
Be of cheer ; for then, ere long,
At your bars her face you'll see,—
Then the lock shall feel the key
Turn its rusty round,—and then,
Love know liberty again !”

A MADRIGAL.

ALL the world is bright,
All my heart is merry,
Violets and roses red,
 Sparkling in the dew :
Brow—the lily's white ;
Lip—the crimson berry ;
Hark, I hear a lightsome tread,—
 Ah, my love, 'tis you !

Wing to me, birds, and sing to me ;
None so happy as I !
Only the merriest melodies bring to me
 When my beloved is by.

All the air is sweet,
All my heart is quiet,
Fleecy clouds on breezes warm
Floating far above :
Eye—where soft lights meet ;
Cheek—where roses riot ;
Look, I see a gracious form,—
Ah, 'tis you, my love !

Wing to her, birds, and sing to her ;
None so happy as she !
Only the merriest melodies bring to her,—
Only this message from me !

A BETROTHAL.

“ **I** LOVE you,” he whispered low,
 In joy, for a moment bold ;
And suddenly, white as snow,
 The warm little hand grew cold.

“ I love you,” again he said,
 And touched the soft finger-tips ;
But shyly she bent her head,
 To hide the two trembling lips.

“ I love you,”—she turned her face.
 His heart overfilled with fear ;
When lo, on her cheek the trace
 Of one tiny passion-tear !

“ I love you,” he gently spoke,
 And kissed her, sweet, tearful ~~syed~~ ;
The rose-blossom fetters broke :
 “ I love you, too,” they replied.

A PERSIAN DANCING GIRL.

JASMINES tangled in her hair—
Ebon hair that loosely hangs,
Looped with silver serpent fangs,
Swaying in the scented air.

Silken sandals on her feet—
Tiny feet that trip in time
To the tambourine, and rhyme
With the tinkling music sweet.

On her olive-tinted breast,
Turquoise trinkets, jewels, rings—
Lovers' tokens—gifts from kings,
Jingle gayly, never rest.

Now she gives a dizzy twirl
To the measure of the dance—
Quicker than a stolen glance,
Glides the dainty, graceful girl.

Just beyond the eager throng
Lazily her lover smokes
With his rivals, telling jokes
Spiced with strains of Persian song.

Idly waiting—well he knows
How they hate him, every one.
In the garden of the Sun
He has picked the fairest rose.

A MADRIGAL.

SWEETHEART, the year is young,

And 'neath the heavens blue

The fresh wild-flowers have hung

Their cups to catch the dew.

And love like a bird carols one soft word,

Sweetheart, to the sapphire skies ;

And floating aloft comes an echo soft

“ Sweetheart”—your eyes !

Sweetheart, the year is sweet

With fragrance of the rose

That bends before your feet

As to the gale that blows.

And love like a bird quavers one low word,
Sweetheart, to the garden place ;
And across the glow comes an echo low
“ Sweetheart”—your face !

Sweetheart, the year grows old ;
Upon the meadows brown
And forests, waving gold,
The stars look, trembling, down.

And love like a bird whispers one pure word,
Sweetheart, to the cooling air ;
And the breezes sure waft an echo pure
“ Sweetheart”—your hair !

Sweetheart, the year wanes fast ;
The summer birds have flown
From winter’s spiteful blast
Unto a sun-bound zone.

And love like a bird warbles one clear word,
Sweetheart, to the balmy south ;
And back to my ear comes an echo clear
“ Sweetheart”—your mouth !

Sweetheart, the year is gone ;—

Lean closer to my heart !

Time only weighs upon

The loves that dwell apart.

And love like a bird with his whole soul stirred,

Sweetheart, shall carol his glee ;

And to you I'll cling while the echoes ring

“Sweetheart”—for me !

CHILD-FANCIES.

IN THE MEADOW.

THE meadow is a battle-field
Where Summer's army comes,
Each soldier with a clover shield,
The honey-bees with drums.
Boom, rat-ta ! they march, and pass
The captain tree who stands
Saluting with a sword of grass
And giving them commands.

'Tis only when the breezes blow
Across the woody hills,
They shoulder arms, and, to and fro,
March in their full-dress drills.
Boom, rat-ta ! they wheel in line
And wave their gleaming spears ;
"Charge !" cries the captain, giving sign,
And every soldier cheers.

But when the day is growing dim
They gather in their camps
And sing a good thanksgiving hymn
Around the fire-fly lamps.

Rat-tat-ta ! the bugle-notes
Call "good-night" to the sky :
I hope they all have overcoats
To keep them warm and dry.

IN THE ORCHARD.

O ROBIN in the cherry tree
I hear you caroling your glee:
The platform where you lightly tread
Is lighted up with cherries red,
And there you sing among the boughs
Like Patti at the opera-house.
Who is the hero in your play
To whom you sing in such a way ?
And why are you so gayly dressed
With scarlet ribbons on your breast ?
And is your lover good and true ?
And does he always sing to you ?
Your orchestra are winds that blow
Their blossom-notes to me below ;
And all the trembling leaves are throngs
Of people clapping for your songs.
I wonder if you like it when
I clap for you to sing again.

WIZARD FROST.

WONDROUS things have come to pass
On my square of window-glass.

Looking in it I have seen
Grass no longer painted green,—
Trees whose branches never stir,—
Skies without a cloud to blur,—
Birds below them sailing high,—
Church-spires pointing to the sky,—
And a funny little town
Where the people, up and down
Streets of silver, to me seem
Like the people in a dream,
Dressed in finest kinds of lace:
'Tis a picture, on a space
Scarcely larger than the hand,
Of a tiny Switzerland,
Which the wizard Frost has drawn
'Twixt the nightfall and the dawn.
Quick and see what he has done
Ere 'tis stolen by the Sun.

THE BOOK-HUNTER.

A CUP of coffee, eggs, and rolls
Sustain him on his morning strolls:
Unconscious of the passers-by,
He trudges on with downcast eye;
He wears a queer old hat and coat,
Suggestive of a style remote;
His manner is preoccupied,—
A shambling gait, from side to side.
For him the sleek, bright-windowed shop
Is all in vain,—he does not stop.
His thoughts are fixed on dusty shelves
Where musty volumes hide themselves,—
Rare prints of poetry and prose,
And quaintly lettered folios,—
Perchance a parchment manuscript,
In some forgotten corner slipped,

Or monk-illumined missal bound
In vellum with brass clasps around ;
These are the pictured things that throng
His mind the while he walks along.

A dingy street, a cellar dim,
With book-lined walls, suffices him.
The dust is white upon his sleeves ;
He turns the yellow, dog-eared leaves
With just the same religious look
That priests give to the Holy Book.
He does not heed the stifling air
If so he find a treasure there.
He knows rare books, like precious wines
Are hidden where the sun ne'er shines ;
For him delicious flavors dwell
In books as in old Muscatel ;
He finds in features of the type
A clew to prove the grape was ripe.

And when he leaves this dismal place,
Behold, a smile lights up his face !
Upon his cheeks a genial glow,—
Within his hand Boccaccio,
A first edition worn with age,
“*Firenze*” on the title-page.

AT THE DOOR.

WHAT time the night-bird to the rose
Sings of his love,

I seek her garden-plot where grows
A blossom-laden vine that throws
Its arms above,

And scales the weary stretch of stone,
Until at length
It clasps her lattice open thrown,
And sees the sweet face of my own
And finds new strength.

How often I have strived to climb
Love's barrier wall
Upon the ladder of my rhyme :
A little way,—yet, time on time,
I faint and fall.

Methinks if once I could but rise
Up to the bars,
And gather courage from those eyes
To speak—so close unto the skies—
Unto the stars—

Alas, my fancy goes no more !
Perhaps 'twould be
As if, with weary feet and sore,
I came to Heaven's closèd door
Without a key.

A REMINISCENCE.

THERE was a time, fond girl, when you
Were partial to caresses ;
Before your graceful figure grew
Too tall for ankle-dresses ;
When " Keys and Pillows," and the rest
Of sentimental pastimes,
Were thought to be the very best
Amusement out of class-times.

You wore your nut-brown hair in curls
That reached beyond your bodice,
Quite in the style of other girls,—
But you I thought a goddess !
I wrote you letters, long and short,
How many there's no telling !

Imagination was my forte :—

I can't say that of spelling !

We shared our sticks of chewing-gum,

Our precious bits of candy ;

Together solved the knotty sum,

And learned the *ars amandi* :

Whene'er you wept, a woful lump

Stuck in my throat, delayed there !

My sympathetic heart would jump :—

I wondered how it stayed there !

We meet to-day,—we meet, alas !

With salutation formal ;

I'm in the college senior class,

You study at the Normal ;

And as we part I think again,

And sadly wonder whether

You wish, as I, we loved as when

We sat at school together !

LOVE'S SEASONS.

'TWAS spring when I first found it out;
 'Twas autumn when I told it;
The gloomy winter made me doubt,
 And summer scarce could hold it:
"She loves," the mating robins sang
 In sweet, delicious trebles,
And through the brooks the echo rang
 In music o'er the pebbles.

The fresh air, filled with fragrant scent
 Of blossoms, softly hinted
The self-same song; where'er I went
 I found the message printed
On bud and leaf, on earth and sky,
 Through sun and rain it glistened,

And though I never reasoned why,
I always read or listened.

The summer dawned, and still the birds
Sang in their tree-top glory,
And something seemed to make their words
A sequel to my story :
" You love," they twittered in the trees ;
Whene'er the light wind stirred them,—
Distracting words ! ---on every breeze
They fluttered, and I heard them.

At last the mellow autumn came,
And all the leaves were turning,
The fields and forests were afame
In golden sunlight burning ;
The parting birds sang out again
A sentimental message :
" Go tell her," whispered they, and then
I thought 'twas love's first presage.

O timid-hearted twenty-four,
To faint and lose your courage,
Or half-reluctantly implore
A pretty girl at her age !
For when I stammered what they'd sung,
And all their secrets told her,
She said the birds were right, and hung
Her head upon my shoulder.

AN AVOWAL.

THREE'S a word in my heart, dare I tell it ?
A dangerous, wonderful word :
It calls, and I hush it and quell it ;
 It flutters and calls like a bird
Made captive from out its dark prison,
 And begs for a glimmer of light ;
Up, up to my throat it is risen,
 And poises for flight.

Her eyes are like stars softly shining,
 Each one has a sparkle within ;
And radiant roses are twining
 In cheeks where my kisses have been.
But something of sadness and sorrow,
 A shadowy emblem of doom,

Seems whispering, "Wait for the morrow!"

And leaves me in gloom.

One touch of her exquisite fingers,

One pressure of velvety tips,

In memory's mazes still lingers ;

One kiss is still fresh on my lips.

But down in my heart in a flutter

A bird dwells to tenderly sing

The song that my lips dare not utter,

The song of a ring,—

A ring wrought of gold, with a jewel

Imbedded within it that tries

To flash back the soft or the cruel

Light locked in her beautiful eyes.

Will she wear it, I wonder, a token

Of all that my heart holds so fast

That the fetters remain yet unbroken

And firm to the last ?

There it comes ! What a ghost of a shiver
Just ran through my stammering tongue !
And down in my heart there's a quiver
Of something that ought to be sung.
One word—ah, my darling, you know it ;
The long captive songster has flown !
Love—love—is the burden ; the poet
Loves you—you alone !

IN PARENTHESIS.

I READ the verses from my copy,
A bunch of fancies culled from Keats,
A rhyme of rose and drowsy poppy,
Of maiden, song, and other sweets :
The lines—so patiently I penned them,
Without one sable blot or blur—
I knew had music to commend them
And all their secret thoughts to her.

She heard the rhythmical romanza,
And made a comment there and here ;
I read on to the final stanza,
Where timid love had made me fear.

A long parenthesis ; the metre
Went lamely on without a foot,
Because the sentiment was sweeter
Than love emboldened me to put.

Alas, I tried to fill the bracket ;
The truant thought refused to come !
The point,—to think the rhyme should lack it !
My wakeful conscience struck me dumb.
She took the little leaf a minute,—
Ah, what a happy time was this !
The bracket soon had something in it,—
I kissed her in parenthesis.

TO MY MESSAGE.

WHEN in her lap you lie,
Little note,
Look upward to your sky—
A tender, mild blue eye,
A round, rose-colored throat,
An exquisite white chin
With one star-dimple in :
Look upward from her lap's
Soft pillow, and perhaps
You may see
Her think of me.

And if by happy chance,
Letter mine,
You see her blue eyes glance
Across your smooth expanse,
Or fixed upon the line

Which rhymes with all the love
Reflected there above,
Grieve not that you are dumb ;
But think that I shall come
Once again,—
Your spokesman then.

Ah me ! would I, like you,
Missive slight,
Might watch those clear eyes blue,
That throat and white chin, too,
And read them all aright,—
Might feel the red lips touch
My own,—I'd give—how much !—
Just once to take your place,
My paradise her face
And a part
Of her dear heart.

A CIGAR.

A LONE I puff soft wreaths of blue
That frame a most delightful view ;--
A little library with two
Together sitting :
A youth and girl. Upon her knees
A novel with a hero ; he's
A ghostly circumstance to these
Quaint wraps she's knitting.

The lover holds the worsted, and
Just touches one fair pinky hand :
How well her bright eyes understand !
For soon, unbidden,
Two scarlet lips begin to move
A conversation in that groove

Where chosen words quite clearly prove
The subject hidden.

And then the knitting's laid aside ;
The needle's dropped ; and some sweet guide
Leads both his hands to haply hide
Two others whiter.

I listen, and a mellow note
Slips through the rosy, rounded throat :
I hear the happy lover quote
The novel's writer.

The writer,—ah, what kind fates come
To keep harsh criticism from
His little book : perhaps 'tis some
Such situation ;—
A picture similar to this,
Portraying a brief spell of bliss,
And punctuated with a kiss—
Interrogation.

I see the faces slowly meet,
And shy, uncertain glances greet :
The knitting's fallen to her feet ;
And on his shoulder
Her head in golden glory lies,
While, fathoming her lovely eyes,
He reads the tenderest replies,—
Love growing bolder.

But, while I dream in idleness,
And wonder whether she will bless
His hearing with a whispered "yes,"—
With drooping lashes ;
The picture fades from sight afar
As pales at morn a silver star ;
I seek the light of my cigar,
And find but ashes.

A BUNDLE OF LETTERS.

STRANGE how much sentiment
Clings like a fragrant scent
To these love-letters pent
In their pink covers :
Day after day they came
Feeding love's fickle flame ;—
Now, she has changed her name,
Then, we were lovers.

Loosen the silken band
Round the square bundle, and
See what a dainty hand
Scribbled to fill it
Full of facetious chat ;
Fancy how long she sat
Moulding the bullets that
Came with each billet !

Ah, I remember still
Time that I used to kill
Waiting the postman's shrill,
Heart-stirring whistle,
Calling vague doubts to mind,
Whether or no I'd find
That he had left behind
One sweet epistle.

Seconds become an age
At this exciting stage ;
Two eager eyes the page
Scan for a minute ;
Then, with true lover's art,
Study it part by part,
Until they know by heart
Everything in it.

What is it all about ?
Dashes for words left out, —

Pronouns beyond a doubt !

Very devoted.

Howells she's just begun ;

Dobson her heart has won ;

Locke and Tennyson

Frequently quoted.

Criss-cross the reading goes,

Rapturous rhyme and prose,—

Words which I don't suppose

Look very large in

Books on the “ologies” ;

Then there's a tiny frieze

Full of sweets in a squeeze,

Worked on the margin.

Lastly,—don't pause to laugh !—

That is her autograph

Signing this truce for half

Her heart's surrender ;

Post-scriptum, one and two,—
Desserts,—the dinner's through!—
Linking the “I” and “You”
In longings tender.

Such is the type of all
Save one, and let me call
Brief notice to this small
Note neatly written :
'Tis but a card, you see,
Gently informing me
That it can never be!—
This is the mitten !

A RHYME FOR PRISCILLA.

DEAR Priscilla, quaint, and very
Like a modern Puritan,
Is a modest, literary,
Merry young American :
Horace she has read, and Bion
Is her favorite in Greek ;
Shakspere is a mighty lion
In whose den she dares but peek ;
Him she leaves to some sage Daniel,
Since of lions she's afraid,—
She prefers a playful spaniel,
Such as Herrick or as Praed ;
And it's not a bit satiric
To confess her fancy goes
From the epic to a lyric
On a rose.

Wise Priscilla, dilettante,
With a sentimental mind,
Doesn't deign to dip in Dante,
And to Milton isn't kind ;
L'Allegro, Il Penseroso,
Have some merits she will grant,
All the rest is only so-so,—
Enter Paradise she can't !
She might make a charming angel
(And she will if she is good,
But it's doubtful if the change'll
Make the Epic understood) :
Honey-Suckling, like a bee she
Goes and pillages his sweets,
And it's plain enough to see she
Worships Keats.

Gay Priscilla,—just the person
For the Locker whom she loves ;

What a captivating verse on
Her neat-fitting gowns or gloves
He could write in catching measure,
Setting all the heart astir !

And to Aldrich what a pleasure
It would be to sing of her,—
He, whose perfect songs have won her
Lips to quote them day by day.

She repeats the rhymes of Bunner
In a fascinating way,
And you'll often find her lost in—
She has reveries at times—

Some delightful one of Austin
Dobson's rhymes.

O Priscilla, sweet Priscilla,
Writing of you makes me think,
As I burn my brown Manila
And immortalize my ink,

How well satisfied these poets
Ought to be with what they do,
When, especially, they know it's
Read by such a girl as you :
I who sing of you would marry
Just the kind of girl you are,—
One who doesn't care to carry
Her poetic taste too far,—
One whose fancy is a bright one,
Who is fond of poems fine,
And appreciates a light one
Such as mine.

A PERSIAN NOCTURNE.

O NIGHTINGALE among the leaves
Who singest to the blushing rose,
Thy liquid, mellow music cleaves
The garden's fragrance where it goes !
Who taught thy feathered slender throat
This strange, delicious, limpid note,
Which soaring skyward through the dark
In swift, melodious pursuit,
Tempts all the trembling stars to hark,
And all the rustling leaves be mute ?

Teach me thy song, O happy bird,
That, 'neath the window of my love,
My lips may speak some honeyed word
With wings to waft it up above ;

And when she comes her starry eyes
Shall shame their rivals in the skies ;—
Her cheeks shall mock the rose ;—and thou,
Beholding what thou thinkest thine,—
Perched lightly on the lofty bough,—
Shalt leave thy rose, and sing to mine !

HER GUITAR.

BY the fire that loves to tint her
Cheeks the color of a rose,
While the wanton winds of winter
 Lose the landscape in the snows,—
While the air grows keen and bitter,
 And the clean-cut silver stars
Tremble in the cold and glitter
 Through the twilight's dusky bars,—
In a cozy room where lingers
 Happy Time on folded wings,
I am watching five white fingers
 Float across six slender strings
Of an old guitar, held lightly,—
 Captivated while she sets.

Here and there, five others tightly
On the frets.

Lost in loving contemplation
Of the fair, shy, girlish face
Conscious of no admiration,
Posed with such a charming grace
O'er this instrument some Spanish
Serenader used to keep
Hidden till the Sun would vanish
And the birds were fast asleep ;
Who, below his loved-one's casement,
With the mellow Southern moon
Through a leafy interlacement
Shining softly, thrummed a tune :
Did she answer it I wonder ?
Did she frame a sweet reply ?
Did she grant the wish made under
Such a sky ?

This I know, if she had listened
To the melody I've heard,
Mute confessions must have glistened
In her eyes at every word ;
And the very stars above her
Must have whispered, one by one,
Something sentimental of her
When the serenade was done.
For this music has but ended,
And I leave my dreams to find
With the notes are somehow blended
Like confessions of my mind ;
And the gentle girl who guesses
What these broken secrets are,
Is the one whose arm caresses
This guitar.

THE MUSE.

FOR months I had suffered derision,—
A siege of poetical blues ;
The fair mythological vision
Familiarly known as the muse
Had vanished and left me deserted,
The frozen rhyme-rills wouldn't run
While she, Miss Calliope, flirted
With some other son.

The ink which I penned every word of
Once put upon paper,—it froze ;
Presto !—transformation unheard of
The poetry turned into prose.
'Twas clear that the rhymes were not running
In pairs simultaneous then,

'Twas clear that my hand had lost cunning,
And likewise my pen.

I conquered some mental depression
In this philosophical grief :
The muse may repent her transgression,
I reasoned,—and turn a new leaf,
And some happy day, unexpected,
Return and do penance a time
By having her manners corrected
In trivial rhyme.

Alas for the “ rhyme ” with the “ reason,”
Those two incompatible words !
I had as well dreamed of a season
Of snow with its roses and birds.
Calliope, I’d had enough of,—
Here Shakspere’s remark came to aid
My brain with a trope :—She’s the stuff of
Which visions are made.

Then sudden, with never a warning,
A voice at my side bade me write,
As if out of darkness the morning
Had flooded the landscape with light ;
The rhymes came again like the verdure
Which lifts to the heavens above,—
Ah, Sweetheart, 'twas then that I heard your
Lips murmuring love !

FOR SAYNTE VALENTYNE, HIS DAYE.

GOE, little Rhyme, & greete Her,
Goe, tel Her y^t I thinke
Things infinitely sweeter
Yⁿ I maie putt in Inke :
Y^e Musick of y^e metre
Shal linger on y^e Aire
Y^e whiles She turns y^e Leaves & learns
Y^e Secrett hidden there.

Flye, little Leafe of Paper,
Flye, merrie-hearted Bird,
& lett your Fancie shape Her
Some dear & simple Word

Soe sweete it sha'n't escape Her,
& if a Blushe you see
Steale upp & chase across Her face,
Return & counsell me.

Haste, little God ! I send Her,
Bye You, y^e MS,
W^{ch} hopefull Love has penned Her
Withe quill in Honie dipt ;
Haste ; bidd Her Heart be tender
Unto y^e lightesome Line
Where I in maske have come to aske
To be Her Valentyne !

TO CUPID, FEBRUARY 14th.

CUPID, goe to Her in haste,
Saye my Hearte is hopefull ;
Of y^e Songes y^t She has graced,
Here 's an Envelope full.
Kiss Her once—y^s be your Fee ;
Kiss her twice—for mine !
Kiss Her thrice & three times three,
Telle Her you have come to be
Her Valentyne !

Cupid, goe in haste to Her,
Saye my Hearte is lonely ;
Hasten, prettie Messenger,
Bring Her to me—only

Kiss Her once—y^s be your Fee ;

Kiss Her twice—for mine !

I shall kiss her three times three,

When you bring Her back to be

My Valentynē.

ENGAGED.

MUTE the music of the fiddle
When we wandered to the door ;
Must have been about the middle
Of the night, or may be more.
Every poising of her face let
Loose the rhapsodies of love ;
Every movement of her bracelet,
Or her glove.

After each adieu was bidden,
Leisurely we took our leave ;
One white hand was half-way hidden
In a corner of my sleeve.
Foolishly my fancy lingers !
Still, what can a captive do ?

Just the pressure of her fingers

Thrilled me through.

Spoke we of the pleasant dances,

Costumes, supper, and the wine ;

Gossiped of the stolen glances ;

Guessed engagements,—mentioned mine.

Some old sorrow to her eye lent

Tears that trickled while we talked,

And I found her growing silent

As we walked.

My engagement? Queer, why stupid

People peddle little lies !

Here, beside us, cunning Cupid

Shot his arrows from her eyes ;

In my heart a twinge and flutter

Followed fast each dart he dealt,

And my tongue tried hard to utter

What I felt.

Standing near the polished newel,
With the gas turned very low,
Conscience seemed to whisper, "Cruel,
Tell the truth before you go."
So my courage, getting firmer,
Set her doubtings all aright ;
Tiny hands came with the murmur,
" Now, good-night !"

'Twas the same delicious lisp heard
At the dance—a merry strain !
True the voice now softly whispered,—
True she let her hands remain
In my own, as if in token
Of some wish in sweet eclipse.
Cherished lovingly, unspoken
By her lips.

Long-lashed eyelids gently drooping,
Face suffused with scarlet flush,

Told the secret, as I, stooping,
Kissed the rose-leaf of her blush :
Like some happy, sunny island
In a sea of joy was I ;
Quick she turned her face to smile, and
Said “ Good-by !”

When we met the morning after,
Blithe as any bird was she ;
Music mingled with her laughter,
Every word was love to me.
So the genial Mrs. Grundy,
Seeing how our hearts are caged,
Tells the truth at church next Sunday
“ They’re engaged !”

A LYRIC.

LADY, at your lattice I
Launch this lyric to the sky
On the fragrant tides of musk
Dewy blooms exhale at dusk ;
Love its pilot,—only Love
Left to haven it above,—
Left to guide it through the bars
Of the twilight to the stars ;
And these sentinels who keep
Careful vigils o'er your sleep
Shall to your soft slumber bring
This love lyric which I sing ;

Thus throughout the summer night
Melody shall make delight
Mingle with your dreams and be
Love's petitioners for me,
Till the East shall hint of day,
And the stars shall sail away
Making music-billows break
On your lids and whisper : Wake !—
Till I see your curtain drawn
And your rosy face—the Dawn !

AN UNTUTORED MIND.

WHEN I was but a lad of eight,
And Dorothy was turning seven,
My life seemed spent close by the gate
Of what I had imagined Heaven ;
So sweet was Dorothy, and mild,
To every fault of mine so tender,
I grew to love her as a child
Accustomed always to befriend her.

Through school hours I observed her dress,—
Plain calico to me was satin ;
The habit often cost recess
And many weary lines of Latin.

She very seldom turned her face,
Replete with roses, fair and ruddy ;
She seemed to think the school a place
For strict deportment and for study.

In all the classes she was first ;
She graduated,—went to college,—
Returned most wonderfully versed
In every branch and twig of knowledge.
Alas ! I wear no savant's cap ;
My brain is not a book-condenser !
No doubt she'll marry that young chap
I hear her call "*Dear Herbert Spencer !*"

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL.

STILL on the corner stands the school
Where my first steps were taken,
The butt of public ridicule,
Deserted and forsaken ;
The belfry no more boasts the bell
Whose tumult used to measure
My boyhood's hours and ring the knell
To every prank and pleasure.

The town has shifted foot by foot
As *tempora mutantur*,
And wisdom's wine to-day is put
Into a new decanter
Whose bright exterior seems to hold
A vital essence cheery,
Yet just this morning I was told
‘Twas dull within and dreary.



The boy is father of the man :

He lives and thinks as I did

When, in short trousers, I began

To have my joys divided.

He took me back to this old place

So with my youth connected,

And looking in the youngster's face

This picture was reflected.

Out from the pages of my book,

Too pictureless for study,

I sometimes used to steal a look

At one face, round and ruddy :

'Twas wrong I knew,—'twas very wrong,

And cost me much derision

When I was laboring with Long—

O,—very Long Division !

My copy-book with faultless lines

Of precept for each letter

Was scribbled over with "Be mine"—s,
A phrase which I wrote better
Than any admonition there :
It somehow seemed to nourish
My jaded heart to read it where
I'd penned it with a flourish.

No matter how I strived to learn,—
No matter how I studied,
Once give my head the proper turn
And then my eyes were flooded ;
For there across the room sat she
Who balked my brain's endeavor :—
Thought I, one day I'll whisper "Be"
And she'll *be* mine forever.

Old school among the summer morns'
And afternoons' long dozes—
Those hours of mingled mental thorns—
You put some minute-roses ;

One—one you put, to me the best,—
The sweet face of my story,
Who budded, bloomed, then, like the rest,
Died in her fullest glory.

Ah me, the children you have known,—
The girl with bird-like laughter,—
The boy whose penitential moan
Pierced to your topmost rafter,—
Who hears to-day the voice of mirth
Or sorrow's peal, I wonder !
How many yet are on the earth ?
Alas,—how many under !

Fit emblem of the change of time—
Minerva's palace-ruin,
Take this, a pupil's idle rhyme
With love and me and you in ;
And may the boy whose school-hours seem
To-day so dull and gloomy,
Grown up, inherit such a dream
As you have pictured to me.

A COLONIAL MISSIVE.

BY Dorothy in Cambridge town
This letter quaint was written
To some young chap in cap and gown
Whose happy heart was smitten,
Long years ago when stately dames
Were puffed and powdered Madams,
And these were frequent college names,—
Ware, Eliot, and Adams.

The college yard was larger then,—
The roll of students only
Could muster up a hundred men,—
Think, now-a-days, how lonely !

Yet almost every one of those
Who won an A. B. honor
Has left a name whose glory throws
The laurels thick upon her.—

Dear Harvard ! It is hard to sing
Of this un-Annexed maiden
Without forgetting everything
Save you. My mind is laden
With memories of by-gone days
When I was wont to travel
To lectures and the triumph blaze
Across the paths of gravel.

Just how this lad and lassie looked,
Or what was his or her name—
Her easy running quill ne'er crooked
The semblance of a surname,—
It matters not. I like to think
I see her in the creamy

Old paper 'twixt the lines of ink,—
A face refined and dreamy.

I picture her in homespun dress,
Each small foot in a sandal,
Her features full of tenderness
Illumined by a candle,
Her quill a feather slim and white
Above the square of paper,
The hand that guides it left or right
Small, and the fingers taper.

Those were the days of waxen seals
And “f”-ish-looking “s”-es,
Of high-heeled boots and spinning-wheels
On which they spun their dresses ;
And in this missive one may find
Such candor in a sentence
'Twould bring, if one were half inclined,
A sinner to repentance.

'Tis faded somewhat since it felt
 Her fingers smooth its features,
And with it Father Time has dealt
 As with us human creatures :
A wrinkle wreathes its inky smile
 And hides the comma-dimple,
And makes it seem severe in style
 Which is severely simple.

Ah, Cambridge Dorothy, I know
 As long as you were living—
A rose-face framed in locks of snow,—
 His love had no misgiving ;
And this love-letter which you penned,—
 Fast deepening to yellow,
Seems thus to whisper : *Like me, Friend,*
 Let love make thy life mellow !

GOOD-NIGHT.

THE white stars blossom in the skies,
Like daisies strewn in azure aisles ;
I miss but two,—the gentle eyes
That greet me with your smiles.

Love's small astronomy is mine
Who missing these miss all the rest :
I hate these rival lights that shine
To mock my lonely quest.

Good-night, and may the angels keep
Their faithful watches o'er each lid,
Behind whose fringes, bathed in sleep,
A turquoise sky is hid.

SONNETS.

BREEZES OF MORNING.

ONCE when the doors of night were open thrown—
I saw the pink-robed Dawn,—as one who sees
A rose-bud opening by slow degrees,—
Step from the Orient, a golden zone
About her waist: then, sudden, softly blown
On fragile blossom-bugles by the breeze,
I heard the fragrant roll-call of the bees
And saw them troop responsive to the tone.

And as I watched them drain their cups of dew,
And saw them dart and flash their saffron stripes
In all the opal radiance of dawn,
The mythic age seemed merged into the new,
And Pan once more upon his slender pipes
Called to the dance the nimble nymph and faun.

A PACIFIC DAWN.

WHEN pale Selene in her crescent boat
Sails down unto the margin of the West
Through shoals of stars that twinkle in unrest,
In fancy's bark I follow her, and float
O'er sapphire seas to dreamy realms remote,
And at my side there goes a feathered guest
Who sings to cheer me, and the air is blest
With melody responsive to his note.

On, on I journey in the starry wake,
And all about me is the purple dark
Whence blow the winds by which my bark is borne ;
And suddenly the poppy fetters break,
The moon is gone, and in the field a lark
Pays tribute to the faint Pacific morn.

A BUTTERFLY IN WALL STREET.

WINGED wanderer from clover meadows sweet,
Where all day long beneath a smiling sky
You drained the wild-flowers' cups of honey dry
And heard the drowsy winds their loves repeat,
What idle zephyr whispering deceit
Has won your heart and tempted you to fly
Unto this noisy town and vainly pry
Into the secrets of this busy street ?

To me your unexpected presence brings
A thought of fragrant pastures, buds and flowers,
And sleepy brooks, and cattle in the fold ;
Or, watching as you soar on trembling wings,
I think for those who toil through weary hours
You are a type of their uncertain gold.

THE DANCING GYPSY.

UPON a mottled, tawny leopard-skin
Spread in the sunshine on the dusty ground,
Stood she,—a gypsy girl ; and, circled round,
Sat dusky youths who made a merry din
With wild, barbaric drums, while she, within,—
A graceful figure, by no garments bound,—
Danced to the tambourine's discordant sound,
And mocked the instrument's delirious spin.

Outside the ring were grouped some Arab boys,
Who chattered glibly in the golden sun,
And sang weird strains of song by fits and starts ;
They seemed unconscious of the swelling noise,
Yet he alone was so,—her chosen one :
For all the rest, she danced upon their hearts !

STRATEGY.

MUSE, grant me some new simile to sing
Her matchless grace and loveliness, and tell
What words shall fit the lyric's measure well,
What metre smooth unto her lips to bring :
Then shall my song be like an antique ring
In whose small circlet precious jewels dwell,—
Each line a gem to bribe the sentinel
That guards her heart against Love's eager king.

Then as she lends her eyes to read my song
Perchance her heart its portals wide will throw
And give admittance to Love's messenger,
Who, summoning his king's impatient throng,
Shall capture it, and come to let me know
How easily he won a truce from her.

RE-AWAKENING.

WITHIN a spot where slept the silent dead,
I wandered once when spring had kissed the
earth,

And set around its breast an emerald girth
Of grass, entangling roses white and red ;
Among the leafy branches overhead
The mating robins twittered in their mirth,—
All nature seemed rejoicing in new birth
Beneath the canopy the blue skies spread :

And as I sat beside one mossy stone
Kissed by a hundred suns of summer skies,
A sudden joy came to my heart, alone
Among those graves, to think the dead shall rise
In God's eternal spring when sounds are blown
On angels' instruments in Paradise !

MISS THOMAS'S "A NEW YEAR'S MASQUE."

HE finds companionship in field and wood,
A friendly face in every path and nook ;
The skies for her wear no uncertain look ;
She comprehends the mystery and mood
Of winds and waves and Heaven's starry brood ;
She knows the message of the bird and brook ;
For her all Nature is an open book,
And solitary means not solitude.

With this small volume as your talisman,
When all the world is shrouded in the snows,
Sit down and read these music-making words :
And winter's blasts shall seem the winds that fan
Your face in June—sweet with the breath of rose,
And tremulous with twitterings of birds !

FRENCH FOLLIES.

COME, PAN, AND PIPE.

COME, Pan, and pipe upon the reed,
And make the mellow music bleed,
As once it did in days of yore,
Along the brook's leaf-tangled shore,
Through sylvan shade and fragrant mead.

On Hybla honey come and feed,—
To tempt the Fauns in dance to lead
The Dryads on the mossy floor,—
Come, Pan, and pipe !

To-day the ghosts—Gold, Gain, and Greed,
The world pursues with savage speed :
Forgotten is your magic lore.
Oh, bring it back to us once more !
For simple, rustic song we plead :
Come, Pan, and pipe !

WHEN TWILIGHT COMES.

WHEN twilight comes and nature stills
 The hum that haunts the dales and hills,
Dim shadows deepen and combine,
And Heaven with its crystal wine
The cups of thirsty roses fills.

Blithe birds with music-burdened bills
Hush for a space their tender trills,
And seek their homes in tree and vine
 When twilight comes.

Soft melody the silence thrills,
Played by the nymphs along the rills ;
And where the dew-kist grasses twine,
The toads and crickets tattoo fine
Drums to the fife of whip-poor-wills,
 When twilight comes.

AN OLD RONDO.

HER scuttle Hatt is wondrous wide,
All furrie, too, on every side,
Soe out She trippeth daintylie,
To lett y^e Youth full well to see,
How fayre y^e mayde is for y^e Bryde.

A lyttle puffed, may be, bye Pryde,
She yet soe lovelye is that I'd
A Shillynge give to tye, perdie,
Her scuttle Hatt.

Y^e Coales into y^e Scuttle slide,
Soe in her Hatt wolde I, and hide
To steale some Kisses—two or three ;
But synce She never asketh me,
Y^e scornful Cynick doth deride
Her scuttle Hatt !

BEHIND HER FAN.

BEHIND her fan of downy fluff,
Sewed on soft saffron satin stuff,
With peacock feathers, purple-eyed,
Caught daintily on either side,
The gay coquette displays a puff :

Two blue eyes peep above the buff :
Two pinky pouting lips, . . . enough !
That cough means surely come and hide
Behind her fan.

The barque of Hope is trim and tough,
So out I venture on the rough,
Uncertain sea of girlish pride.
A breeze ! I tack against the tide,—
Capture a kiss and catch a cuff,—
Behind her fan.

HER CHINA CUP.

HER china cup is white and thin ;
A thousand times her heart has been
Made merry at its scalloped brink ;
And in the bottom, painted pink,
A dragon greets her with a grin.

The brim her kisses loves to win ;
The handle is a manikin,
Who spies the foes that chip or chink
Her china cup.

Muse, tell me if it be a sin :
I watch her lift it past her chin
Up to the scarlet lips and drink
The Oolong draught. Somehow I think
I'd like to be the dragon in
Her china cup.

TO CUPID.

CUPID, tell me how to twine
Words like roses in a line,
Fit my lady's eyes to greet,
For her red lips to repeat
That her heart may fathom mine.

How to make each sentence shine—
Love with modest speech combine—
How to set her heart a-beat—
Cupid, tell me !

Tell me, may I dare to sign
All the love and fancies fine—
All the thoughts and secrets sweet,
That I lay before her feet?
Does she love her Valentine ?
Cupid, tell me !

“AWAKE, AWAKE !”

AWAKE, awake, O gracious heart,
There's some one knocking at the door !
The chilling breezes make him smart ;
His little feet are tired and sore.

Arise, and welcome him before
Adown his cheeks the big tears start :
Awake, awake, O gracious heart,
There's some one knocking at the door !

'Tis Cupid come with loving art
To honor, worship, and implore ;
And lest, unwelcomed, he depart
With all his wise, mysterious lore,
Awake, awake, O gracious heart,
There's some one knocking at the door !

TO MY LOVE.

OUTSIDE, the blasts of winter blow
Across the city clad in white ;
Each flake of madly driven snow
A demon seems, with teeth that bite ;
The windows rattle as with fright,
And winds the chimney whistle through :
Alone with memory, to-night,
I'm happy, thinking, love, of you.

Within, I watch the embers glow ;
The slender flames in sudden flight
Leap from the crackling logs, and throw
Around the room a golden light ;

Romantic tales their tongues recite,
And mellow songs, as if they knew,
Alone with memory, to-night,
I'm happy, thinking, love, of you.

From Dreamland all my fancies flow ;
My friendly books, with faces bright,
Return my listless gaze, and show
No sign of sorrow at the slight.
Hark ! from the steeple's dizzy height
The bells the air with echoes strew :
“ Alone with memory, to-night,
I'm happy, thinking, love, of you.”

ENVOY.

Love, let this song of mine invite
Your sweeter voice to echo, too :
“ Alone with memory, to-night,
I'm happy; thinking, love, of you.”

VALENTINE TO AN ANONYMOUS MISS.

GOLDEN locks in cunning curl ;
Eyes like jewels set in rings ;
Teeth, a row of polished pearl ;
Lips, two rosy blossomings :
Spryly to my side he springs :
Pray, who is this fairy fine ?
At my feet he coyly flings—
“ Will you be my Valentine ?”

Ah, my brain is in a whirl,
Thinking on such dainty things !
'Tis young Cupid ; see him furl
At his back two tiny wings !

Just between, a quiver swings,
Dipt in love's delicious wine,
To each dart the flavor clings—
“ Will you be my Valentine?”

Watching, I shall see him hurl
Recklessly these sugared stings ;
Shaped like lips of some sweet girl
Is the bow his shoulder slings—
Silken hair twined for the strings.
Snap !—What ails this heart of mine,
Clamoring with questionings ?—
“ Will you be my Valentine ?”

ENVOY.

Muse, unto the maid who sings
For my ears this teasing line,
This reply the echo brings :
“ Will *you* be *my* Valentine ?”

A COQUETTE.

She wears a most bewitching bang,—
Gold curls made captive in a net ;
Her dresses with precision hang ;
Her hat observes the stylish set ;
She has a poodle for a pet,
And drives a dashing drag and pony :
I know it, though we've never met,—
I've seen her picture by Sarony.

Her phrases all are fraught with slang,
The very latest she can get ;
She sings the songs that Patience sang,
Can whistle airs from “Olivette,”

And, in the waltz, perhaps, might let
You squeeze her hand, with gems all stony :
I know it, though we've never met,—
I've seen her picture by Sarony.

Her heart has never felt love's pang,
Nor known a momentary fret ;
Want never wounds her with his fang ;
She likes to run Papa in debt ;
She'll smoke a slender cigarette
Sub rosa with a favored crony :
I know it, though we've never met,—
I've seen her picture by Sarony.

ENVOY.

Princes, beware this gay coquette !
She has no thoughts of matrimony :
I know it, though we've never met,—
I've seen her picture by Sarony.

A SWELL.

HIS forehead he fringes and decks
With carefully cut Montagues ;
He angles his arms semi-X,
And dresses in delicate hues ;
His haunts are the rich avenues ;
Staccato is somewhat his gait ;
It takes but a wink to amuse
His sadly impoverished pate.

His costumes are covered with checks ;
He travels in taper-toed shoes
Through Vanity Fair, there to vex
The silly young heart that he wooes ;

He's clever with cards and with cues,
And banters with Fortune and Fate :
Alas, that the lad cannot lose
His sadly impoverished pate !

He's fond of the frivolous sex ;
His light conversation he strews
With "toffy,"—aught else would perplex
The topic his fancy pursues ;
The cud of contentment he chews,
While women and wealth on him wait ;
And nature with nothing endues
His sadly impoverished pate.

ENVOY.

Fair princesses, all who peruse
This ballad, beware ere too late,
Lest Opulence hear *you* abuse
His sadly impoverished pate !

OF RHYME.

WHEN blossoms born of balmy spring
Breathe fragrance in the pleasant shade
Of branches where the blue-birds sing,
Their hearts with music overweighed ;
When brooks go babbling through the glade,
And over rocks the grasses climb
To greet the sunshine, half-afraid,—
How easy 'tis to write a rhyme !

When invitations are a-wing
For gay Terpsichore's parade ;
When dreamy waltzes stir the string
And jewels flash on rich brocade,

Where Paris dresses are displayed,
And slippered feet keep careful time ;—
In winter, when the roses fade,
How easy 'tis to write a rhyme !

When by your side, with graceful swing,
Some fair-faced, gentle girl has strayed,
Willing and glad to have you bring
Your claims for love and get them paid
In kisses, smiles, and words that aid
The bells of bliss to better chime ;—
When Cupid's rules are first obeyed,
How easy 'tis to write a rhyme !

ENVOY.

Reader, forgive me, man or maid,
Against Calliope this crime ;
And let this brief ballade persuade
How easy 'tis to write a rhyme !

TO AUSTIN DOBSON.

FROM the sunny climes of France,
 Flying to the west,
Came a flock of birds by chance,
 There to sing and rest :
Of some secrets deep in quest,—
 Justice for their wrongs,—
Seeking one to shield their breast,
 One to write their songs.

Melodies of old romance,
 Joy and gentle jest,
Notes that made the dull heart 'dance
 With a merry zest ;—

Maids in matchless beauty drest,
Youths in happy throngs ;—
These they sang to tempt and test
One to write their songs.

In old London's wide expanse
Built each feathered guest,—
Man's small pleasure to enhance,
Singing him to rest,—
Came, and tenderly confessed,
Perched on leafy prongs,
Life were sweet if they possessed
One to write their songs.

ENVOY.

Austin, it was you they blest :
Fame to you belongs !
Time has proven you're the best
One to write their songs

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